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Mark John Henrich
St. Cloud State University

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This starred paper submitted by Mark John Henrich in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

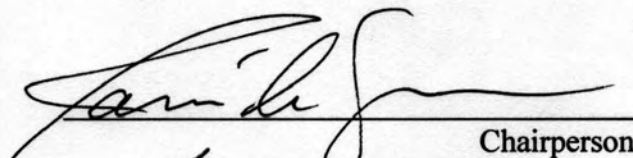
PERCEPTION: DO WE AS EDUCATORS DICTATE OR LISTEN

TO OUR STUDENTS? TEACHERS VERSUS STUDENTS

by

Mark John Henrich

B. S., St. Cloud State University, 1990



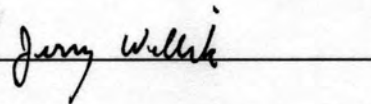
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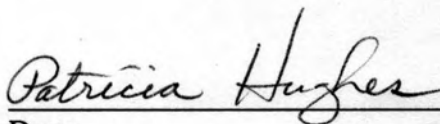


St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science



Dean

School of Graduate Studies

St. Cloud, Minnesota

May, 2014

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THE FUTURE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION WILL BE A MATTER OF
PERCEPTION: DO WE AS EDUCATORS DICTATE OR LISTEN
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II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	14
Introduction	14
Individual	16
Motivation	20
Perception	23
Types of Activities	26
Conclusion	29
III. ACTION RESEARCH	31
Introduction	31
Statement of the Problem	32
Population Sample	33
Procedure	33
Data Analysis	35
IV. DISCUSSION	36
Introduction	36

Chapter	Page
Results	37
Research Question (Survey Questions) (Individual Rankings)	37
Discussion	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
Chapter Introduction	xi
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	14
Introduction	14
Individual	16
Motivation	20
Individual Rankings	20
Perception	23
Physical Education Survey Questions Types of Activities	26
Conclusion	29
III. ACTION RESEARCH	31
Physical Education Survey Questions Introduction	31
Statement of the Problem	32
Activities	33
Population Sample	33
Procedure	33
Data Analysis	35
IV. DISCUSSION	36
Introduction	36

Chapter	Page
Results.....	37
Research Question One Findings (Individual Rankings)	37
Discussion	55
V. CONCLUSION	60
Introduction.....	60
Limitations	62
Recommendations.....	63
REFERENCES	66
APPENDICES	
A. Physical Education Survey Questions Individual Rankings	70
B. Physical Education Survey Questions Individual	72
C. Physical Education Survey Questions Motivation.....	74
D. Physical Education Survey Questions Perception.....	76
E. Physical Education Survey Questions Activities	78
Research Question 7 Findings (Perception).....	80
Research Question 8 Findings (Perception).....	81
Research Question 9 Findings (Perception).....	82
Research Question 10 Findings (Perception).....	83

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Time (Individual Ranking).....	37
2. Technology (Individual Ranking).....	38
3. Peers (Individual Ranking)	39
4. Body Image (Individual Ranking)	40
5. Teasing (Individual Ranking)	41
6. Own Physical Activity (Individual Ranking).....	42
7. Competition (Individual Ranking).....	43
8. Enjoyment (Individual Ranking)	44
9. Research Question 2 Findings (Individual)	45
10. Research Question 3 Findings (Individual)	46
11. Research Question 4 Findings (Motivation).....	47
12. Research Question 5 Findings (Motivation)	48
13. Research Question 6 Findings (Motivation).....	49
14. Research Question 7 Findings (Perception).....	50
15. Research Question 8 Findings (Perception).....	51
16. Research Question 9 Findings (Perception).....	52
17. Research Question 10 Findings (Perception).....	53

18. Research Question 11 Findings (Types of Activities)	54
19. Research Question 12 Findings (Types of Activities)	55

INTRODUCTION

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."

-George Bernard Shaw

Highway 61, north of Duluth, winds comfortably around the shoreline of Lake Superior. Driving this route necessitates at least one stop at a rest area to take in the beauty of Lake Superior. Sitting on one of the rock formations and listening to the sounds of the water, birds and wind, I find myself reflecting back to my grade school years and finally arriving at my high school years.

My grade school years were spent at a small rural Catholic school in Minnesota. I was your typical student, managing and even liking some of the core classes but preferring recess, lunch, and physical education. Recess occurred three times a day which provided me opportunity to release my energy which enabled me to focus more on my classes. When I was in grades 1 and 2, the time would be spent playing on the equipment, such as the teeter-totter, silver dollar, merry-go-round, slide, and the monkey bars. I also would play tag, cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, and snow dog (a game played in the winter). Everyone was included in the

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

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games and on the equipment. Equal opportunity existed for both genders to being chased and returning the favor.

As I progressed in age and grade level the activities would, for the most part, become more structured. I remember playing games of kickball, softball, and flag/two hand touch football (which always ended up being tackle). Sometimes it would be my same grade level playing against each other but most of the time it would be grade level versus another grade level. I remember the games, at times, being pretty intense. As a grade level we hated to lose, especially to the grade below us. I, as well as my classmates, were active in school and outside of school. Pick-up games of softball and football on weekends with my neighbors were the norm. It was not just boys against boys; co-ed games provided challenges also.

Physical education was held two times per week for about 30 to 40 minutes. My school did not have a full time physical education teacher on staff; he came to the school on a shared time contract with other schools in the district. His responsibilities, for two times a week, would be to teach us motor skills, ball skills, fitness components, and the rules for different sports. The classes were always co-ed and everyone would participate with great effort and enthusiasm in all activities.

I finished my sixth grade year and transitioned to middle school. The middle school and high school were located in the next town 5 miles away. The district consisted of three towns with a total of five elementary schools that would be combined in the largest of the three towns. Major changes occurred in my life,

including going from a class of 20 students to 200 students. Class size increased requiring interaction with students from other communities.

A typical day consisted of seven class periods of 47 minutes. One of those class periods was dedicated for Physical Education and Health. I obviously liked Physical Education classes more than Health. If I remember correctly, PE and Health class would alternate each quarter so we would have a semester of each both in seventh and eighth grade. At first the physical education classes were a bit intimidating. Uniforms were required for class and consisted of red shorts, white t-shirt with the middle school name printed on the front and a pair of socks, along with proper tennis shoes and an athletic supporter.

Being responsible for an assigned locker and lock was no problem compared to the challenge of having to get dressed for class and then taking a shower after class was finished. When I look back on it now I realize everyone was in the same awkward situation. The task of getting ready for class every day became easier and easier as the years went on.

After we were dressed we would head out into the gym and get into our squads. Attendance was taken by the instructor based on our spots in a squad. As a class we would first complete warm-ups or calisthenics consisting of jumping jacks, four or six count burpees, mountain climbers, sit-ups, push-ups and a little bit of stretching. Secondly, we would have a brief lesson on the skills being used for that unit followed by a lead-up game. We would eventually play a game. Most of the units were sports-orientated. The class would be divided into three groups beginner,

amateur, and professional. I was given the option, at the time, to choose a group depending upon my skill and comfort level. At the end of the units, part of the evaluation process was to participate in a skills test along with taking a written examination on the current unit.

As previously mentioned, the majority of the units were sports-orientated such as floor hockey, soccer, football, softball, basketball, volleyball, etc. We did do some other activities such as wrestling, dance, bowling, swimming, and physical fitness testing. The majority of the time everyone would dress for class. Some girls did not participate in class during the swimming unit. Personal reasons were their main excuse, but other excuses include their hair getting wet and taking too long to dry for the next class. I do not remember any other time when fellow classmates did not participate in class. It was not an option to not participate even when I was not feeling the best.

Eighth grade class procedures were the same as in seventh grade, just a different teacher. Going to Physical Education class was a bit easier by knowing the routine and instructor's expectations. The lessons were the same but more was expected of me because I was a year older. Therefore, I would choose to join more challenging groups when it came to playing games. The entire class participated as expected with the exception of girls during swimming.

Completing eighth grade meant transitioning to the high school. Another new building and another set of new challenges. The challenges being: the new building, learning where my classes were, meeting new teachers, coping with a different

schedule and being a freshman. The new teachers were fine and eventually I got to know them pretty well. The schedule changed from a seven period day to a four period block system day. The classes were 90 minutes in length which allowed for more time for instruction and completion of assignments.

The change also resulted in more time in physical education class. I had to wear an assigned uniform for class just like I did for middle school. The structure of the class included first warm-ups followed by skill development and a possible game. If the teachers felt we were competent with the skills and rules, then the entire period would be set aside to play a game. The class would be separated into teams and then we would play the game for that unit. Most of the time it would be a round robin tournament to determine an overall winner in the class. The activities were the same as in middle school with a few new activities such as badminton and table tennis. Again, I do not remember classmates sitting out and not participating in class. The only time would be during the swimming unit.

Physical education was a required class during freshman and sophomore year. Part of my sophomore year was spent taking health and drivers' education. I had the option to take PE electives during my junior and senior year. I chose to take Individual and Dual Sports and Team Sports. The Individual and Dual Sports dealt more with racquet sports such as tennis, table tennis, badminton, and pickle ball. The Team Sports class was a class that focused on team sports and the next higher level of my freshman and sophomore physical education classes. The girls who decided to take the elective classes participated fully in the activities.

Being expected to participate in physical education class carried over into our lives away from school as well. I would get together with friends on the weekends and play pick-up softball or football, but mostly football. The games would typically be played on a Sunday afternoon at a friend's house. We would start playing before the Vikings game, at halftime, and after the game. The games would start out being flag or two-hand touch, but would eventually become tackle. I remember some of the games being very intense but still being friends when the game was over. As a group we would be co-ed some of the time, but mostly the guys played a majority of the time.

I think the expectations were set high by the instructor at the beginning of the class and the students abided by the instructor's wishes. In the past I along with my classmates had more respect for the instructor. I did what I was asked to do. If it was a requirement of the class I did it. The level of activity I remember happening in class at all levels carried over to after school and weekend free time. I was allowed to stay outside all day during the summer without supervision at the elementary level. As I got older the social aspect of getting together on weekends to play pick-up games increased. I believe part of this level of activity was due to the community expectations on athletics and the era I grew up in.

I started my first full-time Physical Education and Health teaching position in 1998 at a small Kindergarten to sixth grade charter school. The school's emphasis was small class size and multi-level classes. The school had been in operation for a few years before I received my chance to teach. I was the first Physical Education and

Health Specialist they had, and I was expected to develop the curriculum for the Physical Education and Health program. I also created an after-school program for students in grades fourth through sixth grade. The curriculum included the full complement of motor development, fine, gross and locomotor, along with specific skills for the different sports and fitness components. The after-school program added to the curriculum by allowing the students to get better at a particular sport in addition to giving the students something to do after school. I also brought in some activities that I did not cover in the curriculum. The after-school program was developed to give the students who wanted an opportunity to participate in structured activities after school a chance to do so.

I enjoyed the 2 years I spent at this small charter school. My expectations for the students were high as far as their participation in class and physical development. The students did not disappoint me. The only time that a student sat out of class was due to an injury or illness. The elementary students loved Physical Education and hated to miss class. I had a couple of exceptions for students who did not like to participate. Some felt they were not as good as their classmates. The two boys in this case were in fourth grade and had class with athletic fifth and sixth grade boys and girls. The other boys in class were great and tried to help them develop and be involved in class. After some coaxing from the other boys, the classroom teacher, and myself, the boys gradually became more involved. I was able to teach the students new activities with structure and consistency. Physical Education was every day for

50 minutes and this allowed for consistency and great physical and mental development.

I moved on after 2 years to a K-12 school in the fall of 2000. At this school I was expected to teach kindergarten and later on grades 1-3, eighth grade health, all sophomore physical education and health, and a weight aerobics class along with coaching varsity girls' basketball and assistant track and field. I hit all levels of the school and knew almost every student. The expectations of full participation were set by the senior Physical Education and Health instructor. Kindergarten was no problem all the students participated and enjoyed the class. My older physical education students all participated and if they did not dress they played in their street clothes. For the most part participation in class was the normal routine at this school.

I would at times get students, boys and girls, who did not want to participate at all in class. I had them do a one page summary reaction paper on a sport-related article/story from a magazine or research material to make up the points for not participating. This started to be a waste of time for both the students and myself. The work turned in was not very good and did not meet my requirements. I then decided to allow the students to make up days missed by coming to the weight room after school. If the student chose to come to the weight room I would teach them how to lift weights to make up for the points missed in class. By coming in the student would spend 30-40 minutes with me which would be equivalent to the class time missed. The students that chose to make up their time missed from class came and worked very hard. The students benefited in two ways: 1) they were able to make up the time

missed in class and receive full credit, and 2) the student learned how to lift weights which is a life-long activity. The plan worked well; it did not reach all of the students but a good majority took advantage of the chance to boost their grade.

I spent 7 years at my second school district, but felt it was time to move on to bigger and better things. I started teaching at my third and current school district in the fall of 2007. At this school I was strictly middle school and high school along with coaching varsity girls' basketball. My teaching responsibilities included seventh, ninth, and 10th grade physical education along with junior and senior electives in Strength Training and Lifetime Activities. I also taught health to eighth and 10th-graders. My schedule did not change much from my previous school.

The only thing that changed was how the department dealt with students who did not dress for class. The students were allowed to sit out. A note was accepted three times per quarter to excuse the student from not participating due to illness, injury, and various other reasons. If a student did not dress four times during the quarter and it was not excused he/she failed the quarter and were sent to study hall. Some students took advantage of this and did not dress the first week so they could be sent to study hall. This was a far cry from what I was used to at my previous school. I was new and went with the department's protocol for a while. I did not agree with the automatic fail after four zeroes and sending them to study hall. I decided to tweak the protocol for my classes. I did not fail a student after four non-dress sessions or send them to study hall. The student was my responsibility and I had to help them pass even if it was with a letter grade of a "D." This did not go over well with the other

instructor, but I continued with trying to get the students to understand the importance of being physically active.

Things changed with the department policy of having the students go to study hall after four zeroes. I made suggestions of having the students fill out a form or do worksheets to get the points back or at least entice them to participate. This did not last long. The same students still sat out and decided to fill out the sheets instead of getting dressed for class. Calling home worked for some, but others continued to not dress or participate in class. The excuses were numerous with the parents signing notes and allowing their son or daughter to sit out of class. Here is just a sample of a few of the excuses made by students:

"I have a headache."

"I have a stomachache."

"I have female problems."

"I don't want to or feel like changing for class today."

"I forgot my clothes at home."

"I only have 1 pair of shorts and they are in the wash."

"I don't have clothes for class."

"I don't like the activity we are doing in class."

"I am too sore from playing in a volleyball tournament this weekend, I can't participate today."

"I am too sore from shoveling snow this weekend."

"I don't want to."

As the years have progressed my responsibilities have changed due to budget cuts in 2009. I was teaching grades 1-6 along with eighth grade health, seventh grade Physical Education, sophomore Physical Education, and Developmental Adaptive Physical Education. Now starting in 2013, I will be teaching kindergarten every day and dropping seventh and sophomore Physical Education and only teaching two classes of eighth graders in Health and Physical Education. The elementary has been no problem; Physical Education is still one of their favorite classes to go to with 100% participation. The only time a student sits out is if they do not have the proper shoes or are hurt.

The Physical Education department has dropped one teacher due to retirement and another due to a change in teaching assignment. I have two new teachers in the department and we are going to try new things to get the students to participate in class. One option the student will have if they choose to sit out is to walk the entire period. The student will get a pedometer and need to get 2000-2400 steps to receive partial credit for the day. They will be allowed this option two times during the quarter. The second option also only offered two times for the quarter is to make up the time before school in the weight room. One of the new teachers will be opening the weight room in the mornings, so we thought this may work as a good option for them to make up the missed day. This option will only be offered one time per week on Fridays. I think that, as a department, we are trying to adjust and give the students an opportunity to receive a passing grade in Physical Education so they do not have to retake the class.

I try and convey to my students at all levels how important it is to be physically active. I do the exercises and games with them and model the correct way, hoping that they will learn by example. I also try and stay as active as I can in my personal life. This summer I wanted to add to my life experiences so I decided to take a Masters class called, "Literary Ireland." The catch to the class was that it was going to be taught in Ireland. I literally jumped at the chance to take this class; it was a better option than spending more time in front of a computer screen. The class was located in Dublin. The instructor led me on a walking tour of Dublin giving me the history of the city and country in 2 days. I was in Ireland for a total of 6 days and 4 of those days were spent walking through the streets of Dublin going from sight to sight. I wish that I would have had a pedometer to measure how many steps I took per day. The other 2 days were spent on day trips; to the Cliffs of Moher and the other to Giants Causeway and Belfast. Each had its share of walking involved. Staying in Dublin obviously had its share of people driving cars or taking public transportation but there were also quite a few people walking as well. I chose to walk wherever I went and happy that I did. I wanted to experience Dublin by foot but also wanted to get some exercise. I enjoyed my time in Ireland and would only change one thing about my trip, and that would be to stay longer. I did more walking in Dublin than I do here in the United States. It was easier to walk places than to get a cab or rent a car. I owe my initiative to walk to many years of being expected to participate in my physical education classes, plus to my personal value of the importance of physical activity.

I want to explore what motivates the younger generation to be physically active or not be physically active. I know that times are changing with the advent of new technology, everyday tasks are becoming easier and easier. Expectations today are of instant gratification and the "me" phenomenon. The future of Physical Education will be a matter of perception: Do we as educators dictate or listen to our students? Teachers versus Students.

"One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes...and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Introduction

What is physical activity? The definition of physical activity can mean something different to each individual who is asked. According to the World Health Organization (2014), "physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure." This movement must be at a great enough exertion to keep a person fit. "The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005) recommended that children engage in daily physical activity for a minimum of 60 minutes at a moderate to vigorous intensity" (Fogel, Miltenberger, Graves, & Koehler, 2010, p. 591). This is a hard recommendation to follow due to the fact that physical education (PE) classes at the elementary level do not meet for that duration of time and if they do the frequency of these classes may be once or twice a week. Even at the middle and high school levels the classes may meet for 45-55 minutes but the time

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Introduction

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spent being physically active is far less than what is recommended. Students need to be physical active (PA) at other times during the day; before school, after school, during school, during recess, or sports. "In the United States, physical activity declines beginning in late elementary school and continuing through high school and into young adulthood" (Felton et al., 2005, p. 57). "Inactivity is associated with the tripling of childhood obesity since 1970, and accompanied increases in health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type II diabetes" (Elliott, Combs, & Boyce, 2011, p. 151).

The emphasis at the elementary and high school levels while I was growing up was on being physical active. Physical activity was a major part of my life then and has carried over into my college and adult life as previously described in Chapter I. The choice was mine to be physically active when I was younger and I believe that I came close in school and outside of school in being active for 60 minutes per day. The issues facing the students that I teach and students around the world in relation to their physical activity levels today are far more magnified than when I was in school.

Physical activity of any type of movement that physically exerts an individual and keep him/her fit is beneficial to enhancing a person's life and well-being. Physical education in combination with health education and sport can help in promoting physical activity as being fun and socially acceptable as a lifestyle. There are some concerns that I have when in the physical education setting that the physical activity levels are not at the recommended moderate to vigorous intensity levels as previously mentioned. The one area of concern that I have been noticing, especially at

the middle school and high school levels, are centered on reasons not to participate in physical activity. These reasons can be broken down into the following categories; individual, motivation, perceptions and the variety of activities. Girls' individual reasons will focus mainly on why they choose not to participate in physical activities. Some examples of individual reasons include; lack of time, influence of peers, parents and teachers, competition, and body-centered issues. Motivation will focus on the intrinsic and extrinsic value of PA to the student. Perception will deal with social, parental/teacher, body image, self-esteem, and negative experiences associated with physical activity. Variety of activities will delve into activities that will increase the physical activity levels of the girls.

Individual

Dwyer et al. (2006) stated in their study that there is a decline in physical activity levels during adolescence. This decline occurs more sharply among girls, with girls being less physically active than boys. PA decline does not only happen with girls, it also happens with boys but the frequency and differences are more noticeable with girls. I have noticed this happening in my classes at the high school. Starting at the middle school level and progressing to the high school level more girls will not dress for class compared to the boys. There are always exceptions to this rule of not dressing for class. I also have noticed that the girls that sit out the most are the girls who are not involved in sports. And if they are involved with sports they feel that their particular sport is the only one they choose to participate in and do not see

the benefit of participating in different sports or activities. This is a puzzle to me why they do not want to be active and have some diversity in the activities they do.

The first study I read by Dwyer et al. (2006) and his colleagues gave me insight into what the possible barriers to full participation in physical activity with girls accentuated a couple of issues. The following questions highlighted these issues: Question one asked why the girls did moderate and vigorous PA; Question two asked the girls to explain what problems they have in doing moderate and vigorous PA. The answers to the questions were varied and interesting; lack of time, involvement in technology-related activities, influence of peers, parents and teachers, concern about safety, inaccessibility of facilities and cost of using them, competition, and body-centered issues (Dwyer et al., 2006). Lack of time centered on homework, part-time job, and family. Technology was the telephone/cell phone and television. Influence of peers, parents and teachers mainly on encouragement and role models. Body-centered issues focused on menstruation, femininity, and appearance.

Many questions can be raised as to why girls' physical activity and athletic participation levels drop once they are between the ages of 9 and 17. The reasons, as previously mentioned, can be many and varied. I want to go further into the reasons why girls PA levels decline and get at the true rationale to the lack of participation. But first we need to look at the reasons why a girl participates in physical activity. Weiss (2000) argued that research consistently points to three major motives: developing and demonstrating physical competence (such as athletic skills, physical fitness and physical appearance), gaining social acceptance and support (including

friendships, peer group acceptance, and approval and encouragement from significant adults), and fun and enjoyment” (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010, p. 619). I would think that the fun and enjoyment aspect of being physically active along with the companionship of friends and then the development of physical competence would be enough to keep a person interested in being active but, there are two possible major reasons not to stay active: interest and conflicts with other activities.

The reasons to be active revolve around fun, friendship, and physical competence. These can also be the reasons to not participate also. Two questions have come to my attention while doing my reading about the reasons for the decreasing levels of PA among young females. These questions are: 1) What are some reasons that girls stop playing sports or other physical activities? 2) Why do girls not play as much sport/physical activity as boys? (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). These questions peaked my interest and may give us some good answers to the question of: Why do young females have a higher incidence of decreased levels of physical activity? Answers to these questions are all based on individual reasons for not participating. I want to get at what is behind these individual reasons. I believe that motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, may be a supporting factor.

The girls gave the following reasons in response to first question: lost interest in activity, time, competence, availability/accessibility, injury, practical issues (financial), poor team relationships (conflict with other girls, conflicts with boys), coach, and influence of friends and family (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). I can see

them being legitimate reasons to stop being in a sport but not to stop being physically active.

The following is in response to the first question by a couple of the girls interviewed with some clarification questions:

“(Girl 8): “I know lots of people that just don’t do it because, like, in high school it is uncool to do it.”

(Moderator): “Uncool? Can anyone tell me a bit more about that? Why is it uncool to do sport?” (follow-up question)

(Girl 9): “If you play like a tough sport and you are good at it, sometimes you get stereotyped.”

(Girl 8): “Yeah, they say “you’re butch” and stuff like that.”

(Moderator): “OK. And is that if you are good at sports in general, or is it....” (follow-up question)

(Girl 8): “If you are good at like, ‘guy’ sports.”

(Moderator): “At guy sports. And what kind of things are guy sports?”

(follow-up question) (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010).

The guy sports referred to were footy (Australian rules football) and cricket.

The next set of reasons are in response to the second question of why girls do not play as much sport as boys and stop playing sports more than boys. The following are the reasons the girls gave; not ‘cool’ or feminine for girls to play sport, social activities, school work, availability (sport options), uniforms and body image (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). The first reason of it not being cool or feminine for girls to

participate in sport was of interest to me. I would think that with the health conscience attitude that we as a nation are trying to attain, that participating in a sport and being toned and fit would be the ultimate goal. This reason was broken down a bit more and went on to explain that girls did not want to build up muscle which may not be perceived as being feminine. If the girl participated in sports was muscular and had definition she would get teased by other girls for being too manly. If the girl was defined, pretty, and competent she would get teased by other girls because they were jealous of her. This I find as interesting, the girls cannot be happy for a fellow classmate for being good. They have to break her down and, instead of getting better themselves, they tease her or quit playing sports all together. The other thought process for the girls is that sport in the female is more related to boys and that sport and being muscular is their identity and a girl doing the same as the boys is being masculine or butch.

Motivation

Motivation, for an individual, can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. My personal definition of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation follow. Intrinsic motivation is the power of creating your own inspiration from within to accomplish goals and tasks set in front of you. Extrinsic motivation is external influences that help you to accomplish goals and tasks set in front of you such as rewards. So far we have explored some of the problems associated with the lack of physical activity with adolescent girls centered on individual reasons. This section will take a look at what

motivates children who are obese, inactive children both boys and girls to be active in physical education classes as well as in leisure-time activities.

The last few years I have been trying to figure out what motivates my students to participate. I have tried to let them be with their friends when I make teams, I have let them pick their own teams on paper, and they have had choice days to do what they want to do. Some classes these ideas work and others these ideas do not. Some information that I have found suggest that changing the physical education programs may motivate students. The results of the information that I found demonstrated through data analysis that two themes formed; individual differences and social environmental factors. "Individual differences included perceived competence, perceived autonomy, goal orientation, perceived usefulness of the lesson, and physical appearance, are associated with students' intrinsic motivation when they participated in physical education lessons" (Hassandra, Goudes, & Chroni, 2003, p. 216).

Social environmental factors included in school and out of school environments. Social environmental factors included lesson content, the physical education teacher, schoolmates, and schools' athletic facilities. Out of school factors included physical activity behaviors of family and encouragement, participation in out-of-school athletic activities, media, cultural values and social preconceptions." (Hassandra, Goudes, & Chroni, 2003, p. 218)

The combination of these two themes has a strong influence on the intrinsic motivation of the student. The findings demonstrate that physical education lessons should be designed to give students independence, competence, choices, confidence and the ability to interact with peers. Along with the involvement of the out of school experience as a positive influence from parents, peers, teachers, lessons, and extra-

curricular activities will play a big part on physical activity levels of adolescents now and into the future.

As previously mentioned, motivation should be intrinsic, but sometimes the intrinsic motivation needs to be helped along. This particular study conducted by Felton et al. (2005) changed the entire high school environment with interventions to help motivate the girls to be more physically active not only in school but outside of school as well.

Intervention guidelines (Essential Elements) and the Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) model were used to direct intervention activities for physical education, health education, school environment, school health services, faculty/staff health promotion, and family/community involvement. (Felton et al., 2005, p. 57)

Major changes were made to school practices, curriculum and school policies to make this intervention work. The results from this entire school intervention resulted in increased vigorous physical activity and moderate-vigorous physical activity for high school girls and an excitement to continue to be physically active. The school developed the intervention to fit the school and took pride in this. Motivation and leadership developed out of this pride which in turn helped to increase the girls' physical activity levels. There are four reasons why this intervention worked. One, the changes made to the physical education and health education course content were easy to develop and use. Two, many groups and individuals helped to promote the intervention. Three, changes at the school level were inexpensive with the help of community groups. Four, allowing teachers to plan for physical activity showed the schools dedication to the intervention process. This study shows how an

attitude can change if an entire school gets behind an idea to give one group extra opportunities to succeed. The girls were given extra chances and encouragement to increase their PA levels in and out of school and they were able to do that.

Physical education specialists need to promote sport and physical activity by focusing on developmentally appropriate activities that are fun and allow for the girls to be with their friends, provide opportunities for single-sex classes, and developing cultural change with emphasis on noncompetitive and self-referencing activities (Casey, Eime, Payne, & Harvey, 2009, p. 891). The focus of sport and physical activity need to have a balance between competitive and noncompetitive activities and allow the girls to be involved in the decision-making, basically giving them a choice. And finally, positive influence and support from family, friends, and teachers through role modeling, positive encouragement, and feedback will help in promoting sport and physical activities for lifelong participation.

Perception

Motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic, can be a big determinant to being physically active during class or during leisure activities. According to Merriam-Webster (2014), perception is the way you think about or understand someone or something. I have had some misunderstandings with students due to their perception of what and how something was said in addition to facial expressions and body language. The perception of working hard or putting in a strong effort into an activity can have many definitions. Perception can be associated very closely to individual reasons and motivation and the decline of physical activity with adolescent girls.

Slater and Tiggemann (2011), in their research on adolescent participation in physical activity, discussed many perceptual reasons for the difference between the genders and their level of involvement in sport and physical activity. They found some interesting results such as: teasing while playing sport, self-objectification, self-surveillance, body shame, appearance anxiety, and disordered eating. I want to explore only a couple of Slater and Tiggemann's findings in order to help in my understanding of perception and lack of physical activity. The first area of concern deals with teasing while playing sport which seems to be the main reason for not participating in physical activity for adolescent girls. The teasing can come in many forms and not only from one gender. Staring and laughing because of how a person looks, made fun of because of being uncoordinated, being called names because of body size. The girls reported that opposite-sex teasing was a problem but same-sex teasing was a major source for their lack of participation.

The second area of concern that interested me was self-objectification in relation to opposite-sex teasing. Self-objectification in association with the male gaze accompanied with comments can and does have an effect on a girl's view of themselves and their abilities resulting in the decline of physical activity. This in turn has an effect on body shame, appearance anxiety, and may lead to disordered eating. Slater and Tiggemann (2011) have concluded from the girls experiences of teasing and associated body image concerns may be contributing to the higher withdrawal rates from physical activity and sport.

The next article that I reviewed was by Evans (2006); she has some of the same findings as previous articles but add a bit more detail to their findings. Evans discussed the following areas in detail; performing femininity and body image, inhibited intentionality and double pressure.

Performing femininity and body image, Evans (2006) discussed in her sub-title the term performance, which refers to how the individual girl or boy enacts their gendered identity. For girls "the 'fear of masculinization' theory is based on the assertion that in Western societies, dominant discourse constructs corporeal femininity as based on appearance and masculinity on strength and ability (Hargreaves, 1994; Jade, 1999). Sports involve the direct comparison in the masculine, active domain. Femininity, on the other hand, is associated with appearance and more emphasis is placed on looking good than being physically active and the ideal image (i.e., what looks good) reflects this inactive feminine role; that is, weak, non-muscular (Evans, 2006; Hargreaves, 1994). From this information I can gather that girls are more concerned or feel that appearance and looking good is more important than being physically active and strong. This ties into the perception that females (feminine) need to look good because they will be looked at or gazed at by the male (masculine). This 'gaze' from the male is ever present either in a coed class or in a single sex class. And may lead to the female to feeling inadequate in the activities they may have to do in a physical education class or for a sport, thus breaking down her self-esteem.

Inhibited intentionality is the next area that Evans discusses in her article. Evans (2006) explained that 'inhibited intentionality' is the tendency for woman to

underestimate their ability in physical tasks such as sport and physical activity. The female perception is that the male body is masculine and the female body is frail, weak and passive. The girls do not have faith in their own body and their ability to be strong and feminine at the same time, while being physically active in physical education and sport.

Double pressure is the last section of Evans (2006) article that I will review.

Evans described double pressure as the combination of the 'fear of masculinization' and 'inhibited intentionality' explanations for girls' reasons for not participating in sports suggests that, for many girls, not only does performance of a 'feminine' identity involve looking 'right,' but also being a competent sportswoman. I agree with her explanation of the two areas and how it all revolves around the perception of how the girls look at themselves and how others either male or female look at them.

Confidence, competence, femininity, and strength are all good qualities that a female should try and achieve, but seem to be hard to attain especially for an adolescent female.

Types of Activities

In their research, Elliot et al. (2011) explored the benefits of having Recess/Energizer packs or activity packs supplied during recess in order to increase PA levels in all students. These activity packs included jump ropes, sport balls, and boundary cones (Elliot et al., 2011). The district came up with an idea to have recess count as part of the 150 minutes of physical activity that the state required per week.

Through the qualitative study five themes became apparent through the interview process.

These themes included: (a) gender differences in the types of activities performed during recess before and after the introduction of the recess packs, (b) how the type and the developmentally appropriateness of activities had been affected by the recess packs, (c) how the recess packs initiative had changed the teacher's role during recess, (d) the importance of addressing nutritional concerns in addition to encouraging more physical activity during recess, (e) the training that principals and teachers had received. (Elliot et al., 2011)

The findings on each of the themes after the participants were interviewed are as follows. Theme (a), before the activity packs the boys created and played games on their own but would get bored; the girls socialized and would hang out. After the activity packs were introduced the boys would play sport specific games and the girls would jump rope or play a sport specific game. The girl's interest in being physically active was very low they would much rather socialize instead of play. Theme (b), the overall thought was that the students were more involved and more physically active with the activity packs. The students played more appropriately with the introduction of the packs and had guidance with what activities to play. Theme (c), the principals all had different levels of expectations for their teachers as far as planning of activities to do with the students during recess. The teachers had different levels of comfort at being expected to plan and supervise physical activities during recess. Theme (d), the principals and teachers expressed concern over nutrition and the unhealthy foods being served in the cafeteria. A poor diet was as much to blame for obesity as the lack of activity. Theme (e), an overall idea was that the principals and teachers need to have more training to be able to come up with activities for the students to do during recess.

The study demonstrated that using activity packs during recess did increase the physical activity levels of all students especially the girls. I have reviewed literature that discussed the type of equipment used for both boys and girls and how that made a difference in activity levels. Equipment can make a difference in the activity levels and how the activity is presented through curriculum can make a difference also.

Activities during recess can help to focus the student not only at recess but also during the school day. The next journal article discussed how the curriculum used in the physical education program can make a difference on participation levels. According to Culpepper, Tarr, and Killion (2011), the three most common curriculum models are the Fitness Model, the Skill Theme Model, and the Game/Sport Model. The models were compared to find the one that would create the most steps for the students in a lesson. The collection of data was with a pedometer which is an accurate way to measure a person's physical activity level. The schools enrolled in the study consisted of 19 elementary, eight middle, and nine high schools. The content in each of the models consisted of the following: Fitness Model had the students participate in aerobic/fitness games, Skill Theme Model had the students do activities such as throwing, hitting a ball off of a tee and other skills that would lead to sport activities, and Game/Sport Model had the students participate in games such as basketball and soccer. The findings demonstrated the Game/Sport Model generated the most steps in comparison to the Skill Theme Model and the Fitness Model. Factors taken into account in the study were gender, the curriculum model, grade level, and the amount

of class time, helped in determining the number of steps used in overall physical activity levels of the students.

Conclusion

Participation in sport and physical activity has been linked to numerous physical and psychological benefits. The physical benefits have been clearly established and include reduction in the risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and other chronic diseases. In terms of psychological well-being, physical activity, and exercise have been linked to positive mood, lower anxiety, positive self-perceptions, and enhanced self-esteem. (Slater & Tiggemann, 2011, p. 455)

The benefits of physical activity are well-defined; that is why the decrease in physical activity by adolescent girls is a surprise to me.

My literature review covered four main reasons why there is a decline in physical activity levels in adolescent girls. These reasons were broken down into the following categories; individual, motivation, perceptions, and the variety of activities. Girls' individual reasons focused on why they choose not to participate in physical activities. Some examples of individual reasons include; lack of time, influence of peers, parents and teachers, competition, and body-centered issues. Motivation focused on the intrinsic and extrinsic value of physical activity to the student. Perception dealt with social, parental/teacher, body image, self-esteem, and negative experiences associated with physical activity. Types of activities discussed activities that would increase the physical activity levels of the girls. I also wanted to find answers to a few questions that peaked my interest during my years of teaching and research. The questions are: 1. What are some reasons that girls stop playing sports or other physical activities? 2. Why do girls not participate in as much sport/physical

activity as boys? (Slater, Tiggemann, 2010). The answers to these questions may give me some good answers to the overall question of: Why do young females have a higher incidence of decreased levels of physical activity? From this information that I have reviewed my hypothesis to the question of why there is a decrease in physical activity levels for adolescent girls is mainly a mental/perceptual concern.

What are some reasons that girls stop playing sports or participate in other physical activities? Why do girls not play as much sport/physical activity as boys? Why do young females have a higher incidence of decreased levels of physical activity? These are the main questions that I want to answer in my action research. I have reviewed some of the literature that has suggested some possible answers to the previous questions. Chapter III will focus on finding more answers to the questions through the conducting of a survey. The survey will be given to both boys and girls with only the girls' answers representing the results needed to help in figuring out the answers to my questions. I am hoping to find the answers to my questions and proving my hypothesis of mental/perceptual concerns in relation to girls and their low incidence of physical activity at the adolescent level.

Chapter III

ACTION RESEARCH

“Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative, intellectual activity.”

-John F. Kennedy

Introduction

Resting on the shore of Lake Superior and reminiscing about my school days from elementary school to high school I have noticed many changes in the physical activity levels in the adolescence of today. Elementary school was a time spent learning the fundamentals of movement and sport related skills as well as being physically active the majority of the time. The movement fundamentals and sport skills I learned were the foundation to my future as a physical education teacher as well as a physically active adult. In elementary school no one sat out because they did not want to participate, they sat out because of being sick or hurt. When I went to middle school and eventually high school the participation levels did not decrease for myself or my classmates. The expectations of the instructors were very high. We were expected to participate in all activities and from what I can remember everyone

participated. Some may have sat out due to injury or other health reasons, but for the most part we were all physically active. My classmates and I were very physically active and sport orientated when we were adolescents in school and outside of school. The mentality of being physically active carried over into my adult life as well. It is one of the reasons I became a physical education teacher and stay active in my personal life. The trip to Ireland demonstrated that by how much of Dublin I was able to visit while on foot. I would not have had the experience that I did by driving or taking public transportation. As a physical education teacher I have noticed a decline in participation of sport and physical activity in adolescents, mainly in females. This is a change from when I went to school. In this chapter I will go into the methodology of this qualitative and quantitative research study of the reasons why physical activity levels are declining. This information will include statement of the problem, population sample, procedures, and data analysis.

Statement of the Problem

In my years of teaching I have found that there have been many reasons for lack of participation in sport or in physical education class. For the purpose of this Action Research I chose to look at the indicators of: why students', specifically female students', sport and physical activity levels tend to decline once they get into junior and senior high school? As a clarification to my purpose I will need to answer the following questions with the help of my own research. Question one; what are some reasons that girls stop playing sports or other physical activity? Question two; why do girls not participate as much in sports or physical activity as boys? Question three;

why do young females have a higher incidence of decreased levels of physical activity?

Population Sample

The individuals that participated in taking the survey were seventh- through 12th- grade male and female students from a small rural Midwestern junior/senior high school. The total population of the school is 414 students with an average grade level of 10. The survey was distributed to all students in grades 7 to 12. The survey consisted of 12 questions in four areas: individual, motivation, perceptions, and activities. Individual and motivation each had three questions, perceptions had four questions, and activities had two questions. With the help of the technology person in my district I created a survey on Google Forms to administer to the students. This form consisted of one survey for Google Forms to administer to the students. This form consisted of one survey for Google Forms to administer to the students. The population of the school is mostly Caucasian with a few African-Americans and Hmong students. Both male and female students were asked to take the survey with emphasis on results from the female students from this setting.

Procedure

I plan to use one method to gather my information for my Starred Paper which will look at two different views on levels of active participation in physical education. This method will be a survey of both male and female students who are in grades 7 to 12 but I will only be recording and focusing on the female responses. The main reason to get both responses to the survey is to see what can be done to benefit both groups in the physical education setting at the school. I plan on focusing my attention with the questions for the survey on barriers to active participation in class in relation to four reasons individual, motivation, perceptions and activities. These barriers to active participation as suggested through some of the research can be related to self-concept, type of activities, social aspects, and competition.

The procedure that I used to complete my action research has a few steps to explain before I am able to get at the answers that I seek. The first thing that I needed to do was to ask permission of the high school principal and Superintendent to see if I could administer the survey to the students in grades 7 to 12. Next I created 12 survey questions in four areas individual, motivation, perception, and activities. Individual and motivation each had three questions, perception had four questions, and activities had two questions. With the help of the technology person in my district I created a survey on Google Forms to administer to the students. This form consisted of one question which involved ranking and the others which used a Likert-scale for the answers. The technology specialist in our district suggested that I create a separate link for the boys and girls to go to in order to take the survey. The reason for the different links was to help in separating the results between the boys and the girls. After creating the survey on Google Forms I printed a hard copy of the questions to show the high school principal in order to get his approval. I then needed to ask the three social studies teachers if they would be able to administer the survey in their classes. The reason for having the social studies department administer the survey is one, they see all of the students in grades 7 to 12 and two, each social studies classroom has a set of 30 Chrome books to use. This made it much easier to reach all the students in one day rather than over a period of days. The survey was administered on April 3, 2014, by the social studies department to the students. The teachers administered the survey in the first 10-15 minutes of class on the chosen day via the Chrome books. The teachers wrote the separate addresses on the white board

or showed on the SMART Board the two different links for the boys and girls to go to. After the survey was given I had access to the tabulated results of the survey responses with the help of Google Forms. I then will study the responses to my survey questions to determine if my questions have been answered and proven with the results.

Data Analysis

The data will be collected in one day during each of the social studies classes. The survey will take a total of 10 minutes from the time of getting out the Chrome books and logging in, till the completion of the 12 questions. The reason for having the social studies department help in administering the survey is that this department has access to all of the students in the school from seventh grade to 12th grade. After the survey is completed I will have access to the answers through Google Forms which will help in tabulating the answers and creating a bar graph for each question.

The responses to the survey questions will be tabulated according to each of the 12 questions through Google Forms. Graphs or charts will be created showing the results of each question. The results will be in the areas of individual reasons, motivation, perception, and activities. With these results tabulated for each question I will try and come to an overall consensus of how to increase the level of active participation in physical education for female students. The reliability of the research will be in the questions asked of the female students and the results obtained from the questions. The validity will be shown by randomly collecting data from the junior/senior high female population.

Chapter IV

DISCUSSION

“All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move.”

-Benjamin Franklin

Introduction

Sitting and reminiscing about my youth and how physically active my classmates and I were, brings me to some logical reasons for our activity levels. Our reasons to be active revolved around fun, friendship and our physical competence. We enjoyed being active either inside playing basketball or outside playing football or disc golf. We had fun while being social. The purpose of my research I chose to look at the indicators of: why students' specifically female students', sport and physical activity levels tend to decline once they get into junior and senior high school? As a clarification to my main question I want to answer the following questions with the help of my own research.

The first question is; what are some reasons that girls stop playing sports or other physical activity? The second question is; why do girls not participate as much

Results

In this section I hope to answer or attempt to answer the previous questions regarding the decline of physical activity levels in adolescent females as they get into junior and senior high school. I will state the question with the results to follow in bar graph form. The data was analyzed via Google Forms.

Research Question One Findings (Individual Rankings)

On a scale of 1 to 8, 1 = not at all important and 8 = extremely important, please rank these individual reasons for not participating in sports or physical activity. The individual reasons were; time, technology, peers, body image, teasing, own physical activity, competition, and enjoyment.

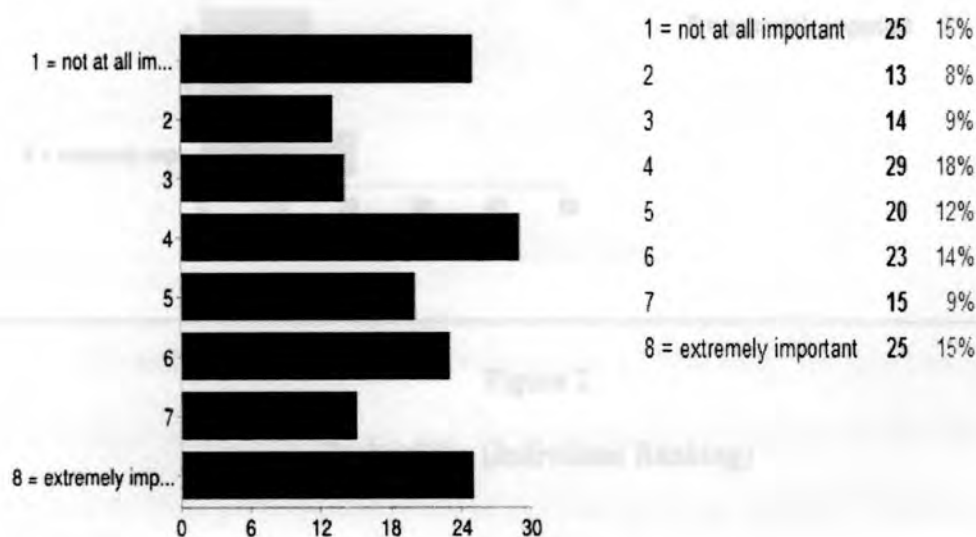


Figure 1

Time (Individual Ranking)

The findings show that “not at all important” and “extremely important” cancel each other out in relation to time being a factor in the decline of participation in sport and physical activity as stated in some of my research. The rankings were all over the scale and fairly close together with the majority in the middle taking the form of a bell shaped curve. This is an important ranking because it shows that time is not a concern or reason for girls to not participate in sport or physical activity as stated by Slater and Tiggemann, (2010).

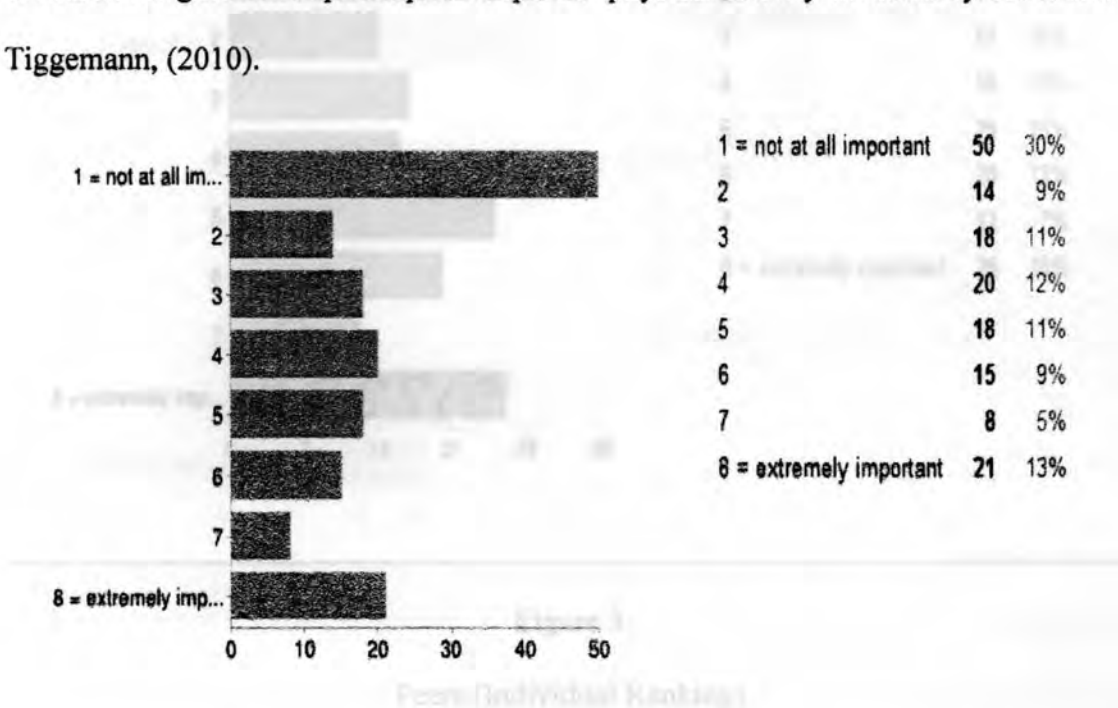


Figure 2

Technology (Individual Ranking)

The use of technology does not have as high of an impact on levels of participation as I would think showing a 30% ranking compared to 13% as being extremely important. I watch my students be glued to their cell phones and iPads every free second they have while walking the halls and even in class. I even notice it

at the gym when I go and workout, the calls or texts on their cell phones makes me wonder how they can get a good workout in with all the interruptions. Maybe on the other hand technology is helping them be more productive with all the apps that are available the girls can still be connected while being physically active.

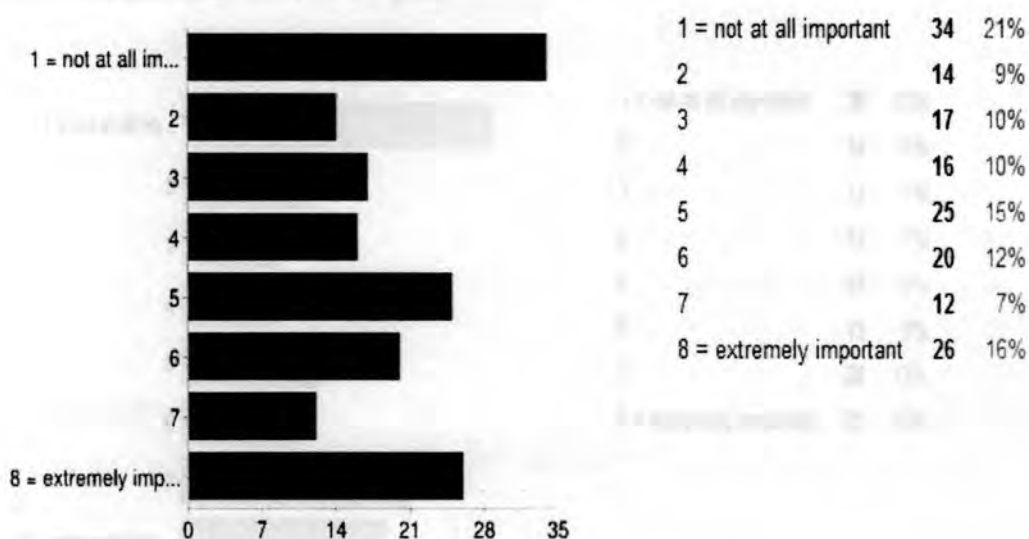


Figure 3

Peers (Individual Ranking)

The influence of peers on participation is a 50/50 split. If I take rankings one to four, demonstrates 50% of the girls surveyed do not feel that peers have an influence on their participation levels in sport and physical activity. Rankings 5 to 8 demonstrate 50% of the girls surveyed do feel that peers have an influence on their participation levels in sport and physical activity. The highest ranking is “not at all important” with a 21% and 34 girls feeling this way. The responses were shared

throughout the rankings. This is a bit of a surprise to me because girls being more interested in the social aspect of relationships, the thought would be of peers being more of an influence on their decisions to be physically active. According to Slater and Tiggemann, (2010) this was one of the main reasons in the decline of participation in sport and physical activity by girls.

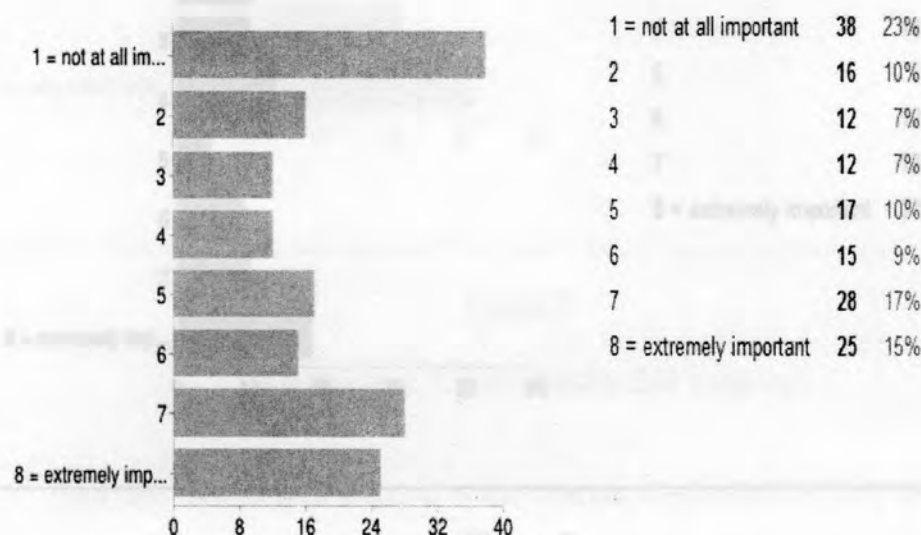


Figure 4

Body Image (Individual Ranking)

Looking at the ranking for the impact of body image on participation one notices that “not at all important” is the most prevalent ranking with 38 girls responding at 23%. But looking at the data a bit more closely I find that in the overall perspective, body image is important by a total of 5 to 8 being on the lines of important. Body image does have an impact on the level of participation in sport and

physical activity with 85 girls responding to rankings 5 to 8. How a girl views herself does have an impact on their ability and if they want to participate in sport or physical activity.

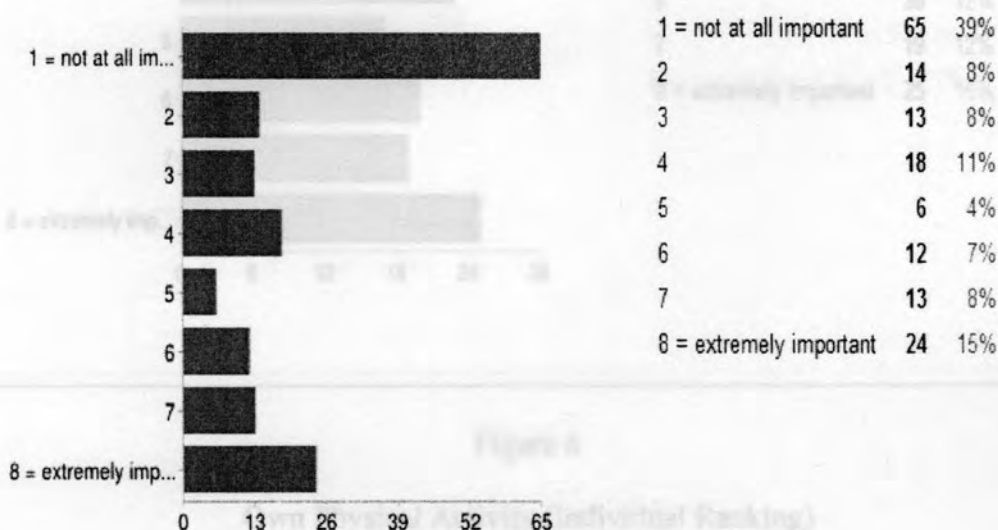


Figure 5

Teasing (Individual Ranking)

Teasing from the responses does not have an impact on participation levels. I, as a teacher, may be putting more of an emphasis on the ones who do not participate in class due to teasing in class or in the locker room. I would have thought that this would have been more of an influence. Sixty-five of the girls responded to this as “not at all important” in their decision to participate in physical activity. The girls where this is not a factor outnumber the girls who feel that teasing is a factor in their decision.

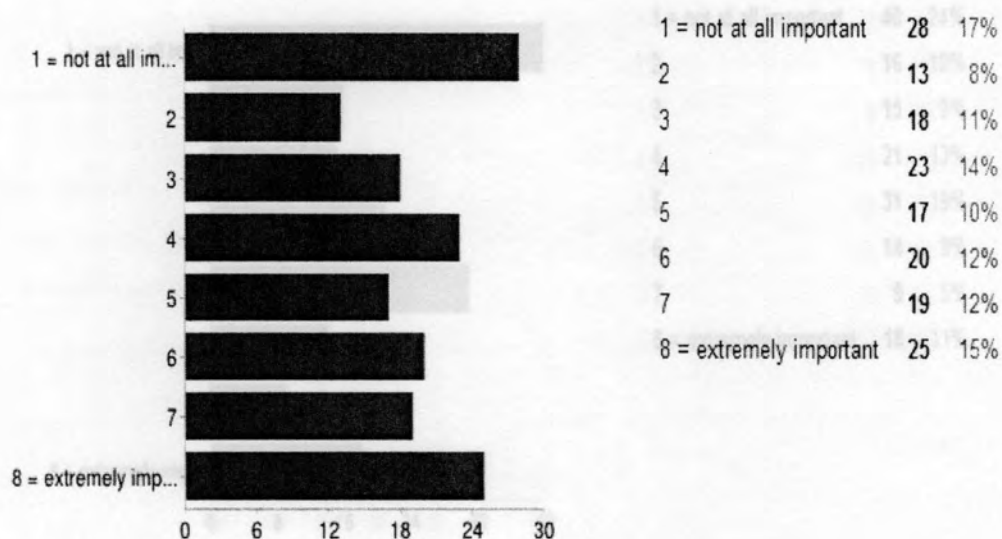


Figure 6

Own Physical Activity (Individual Ranking)

Not sure how to take this one. I feel that the responses are fairly even from the ranking of "not at all important" to "extremely important." My perception is that it depends on who is asked, by this I mean the girls that are physically active will be active and the ones who are not physically active will not be active and possibly the type of activity they are involved in.

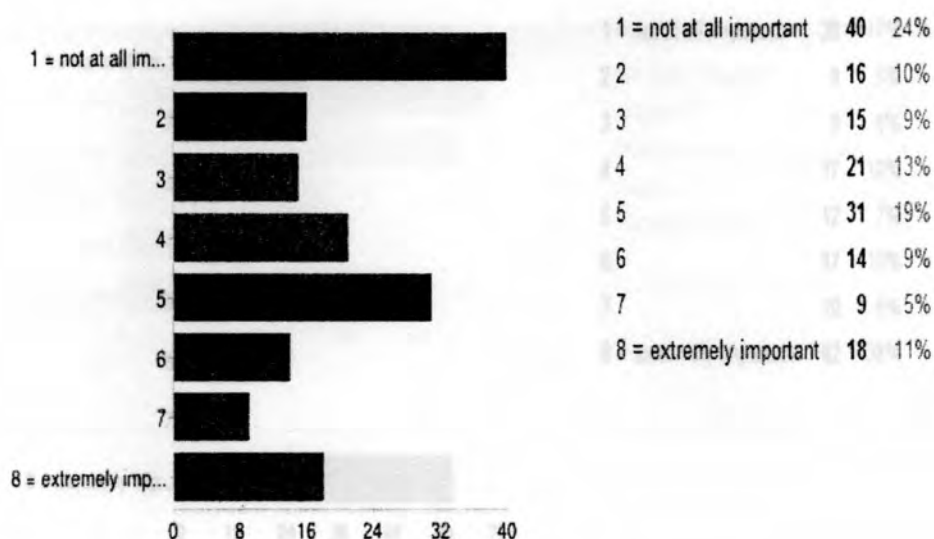


Figure 7

Competition (Individual Ranking)

A higher volume of girls, 24%, feel that competition is not an important factor in their level of participation in sport or physical activity. This contradicts what Slater and Tiggemann, (2010) have stated in their research. This was one of the major reasons for the decline in participation levels in sport and physical activity.

this activity) or similar sports.

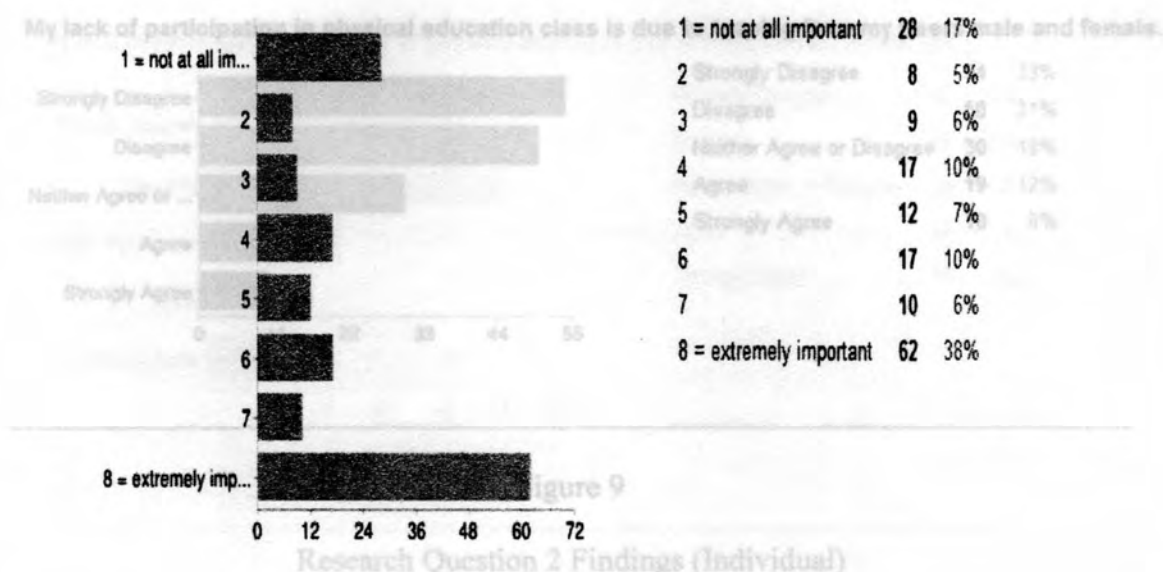


Figure 8

Enjoyment (Individual Ranking)

This does not surprise me in the least with an overwhelming 62 girls responding “extremely important” to enjoyment of an activity and its’ influence on their level of participation in sport or physical activity. The higher the enjoyment level in an activity the higher the intensity level and the frequency of participation in that activity or similar sports.

My lack of participation in physical education class is due to teasing from my peers male and female.

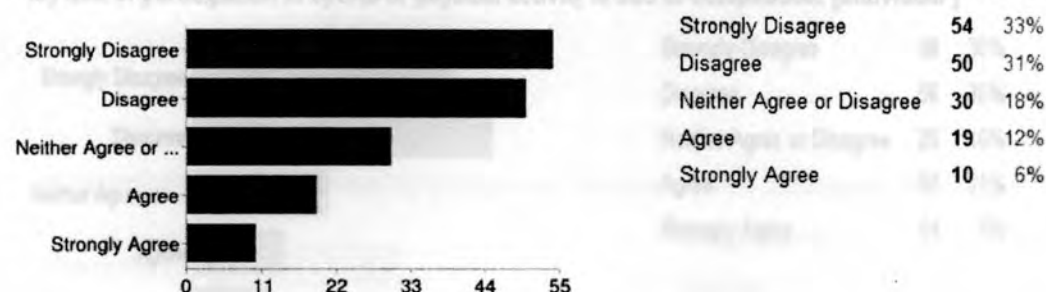


Figure 9

Research Question 2 Findings (Individual)

This statement was directly focused on an individual's response to teasing by peers and not a general response. Teasing seems to be a nonfactor in girls' participation levels in physical education class. One hundred four girls strongly disagree and disagree that teasing causes them to be a bystander on the sidelines during class. And 30 girls neither agree nor disagree with the statement of teasing as a factor in their decision to participate in class. While a modest 29 students feel that teasing from peers is a factor in whether they participate in class.

My lack of participation in sports or physical activity is due to competition. [Individual]

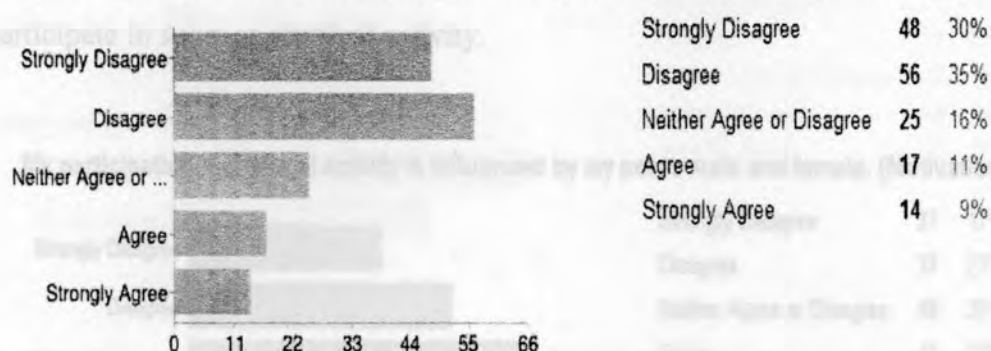


Figure 10

Research Question 3 Findings (Individual)

This statement was directed at the individual and her personal choice to participate or not participate due to competition in sport and physical activity. Competition does not seem to be an issue when it comes to participation levels for the girls in sport and physical activity. Thirty percent of the girls strongly disagree and 35 percent disagree with competition being a factor in participation levels. In comparison 9% strongly agree with the statement that competition causes a lack of participation in sport and physical activity. I am not sure that I totally agree with the responses because in some classes girls choose to sit out or stand and watch while being on the playing area because certain games get competitive. Their choice to not participate may be the fact that it is a co-ed class and the boys are competitive and put more pressure on the girls or do not allow them to participate fully in the activity.

Overall the girls' responses tell me that at my school competition is not a reason to not participate in sport or physical activity.

My participation in physical activity is influenced by my peers male and female. [Motivation]

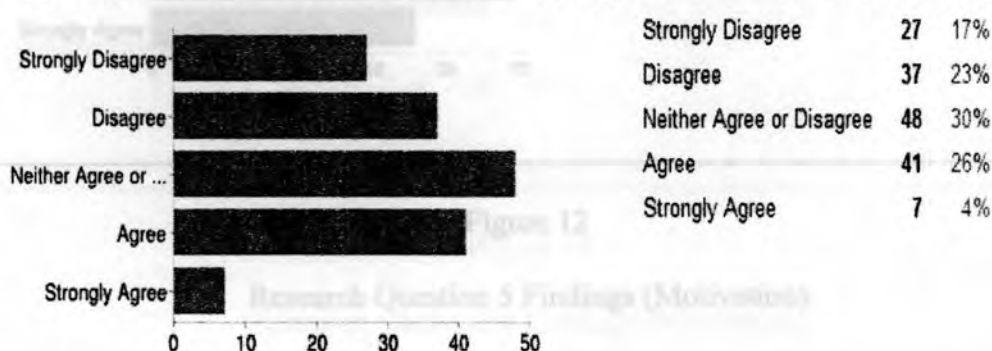


Figure 11

Research Question 4 Findings (Motivation)

Thirty percent of the girls neither agree nor disagree with being influenced to participate by their peers male or female. Twenty-six percent agree that they are influenced by their peers to participate in physical activity. While 23% disagree with the statement of influence by peers male and female. I wanted to find out what the extrinsic effect that peers have on participation levels in physical activity. I have mixed responses with 48 girls being neutral and a slight edge of 41 responses in agreement that peers male and female do have an influence on participation. I think to a certain extent that the girls are influenced extrinsically to participate in sports in particular, if only for the social aspect.

I choose to participate in sports or physical activity to make myself feel better physically and mentally.



Figure 12

Research Question 5 Findings (Motivation)

The motivation of feeling better physically and mentally showed to be a strong influence with 119 of the 166 girls agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The girls know the health benefits of being physically active and how it can help you mentally and physically to be a better person. I wanted to find out if the girls were motivated intrinsically to participate in physical activity. The girls have shown by their responses that intrinsic motivation is a strong influence in their lives and participation in sport or physical activity.

Watching my peers succeed and have fun in sports or physical activity inspires me to participate.

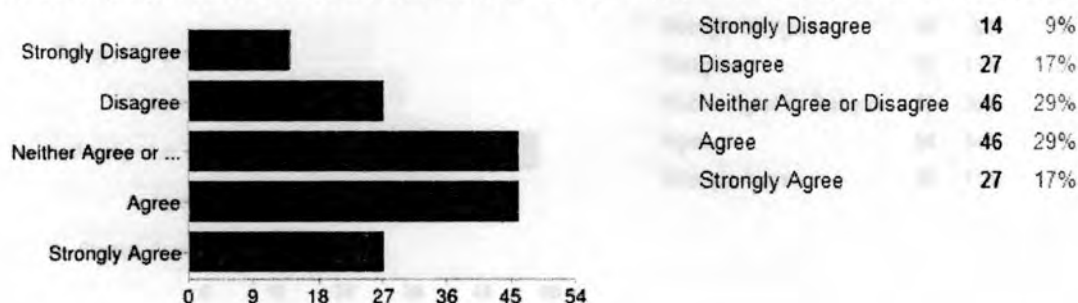


Figure 13

Research Question 6 Findings (Motivation)

With this statement I wanted to see if extrinsic motivation had an effect on the girls' participation levels. Forty-six of the girls responded with neither agree or disagree with the statement that watching their peers have fun in sport or physical activity inspired them to participate. Forty-six of the girls did agree that watching peers have fun in sport or physical activity was an inspiration for them to participate. Overall, extrinsic motivation of watching peers succeed and have fun can inspire one to increase participation levels in sport or physical activity.

My choice to participate in sports or physical activity depends upon my competence in that activity.

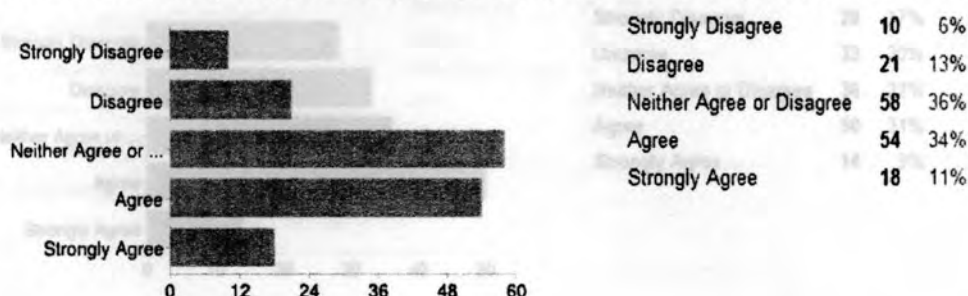


Figure 14

Research Question 7 Findings (Perception)

This statement was directed at the girls' own individual physical ability in a certain sport or physical activity. Thirty-six percent of the girls responded neither agree nor disagree to this statement and their personal choice. Thirty-four percent of the girls agree with the statement of competence has a factor in their choice to participate in sport or physical activity. I think this is more of a factor than what is represented in their responses. The ability to do an activity without looking awkward or embarrassing oneself can be a big deterrent to participating in sport or physical activity.

Lack of faith in my own physical abilities determines my participation level in sports and physical activity.

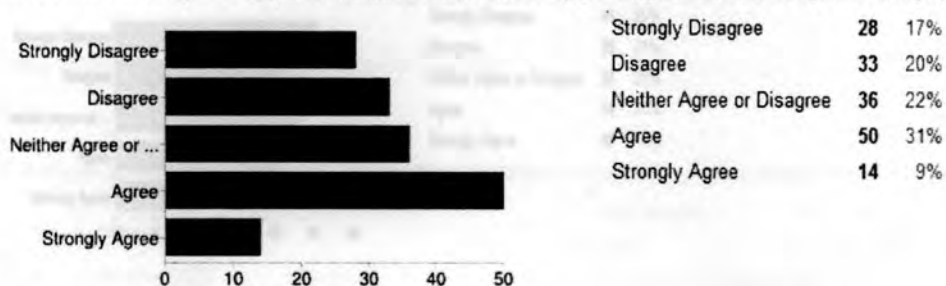


Figure 15

Research Question 8 Findings (Perception)

An individual's perception of faith in their own physical abilities can play as a major factor in participation levels. Seventeen percent strongly disagree with the statement of faith in own physical abilities determines their participation levels. Twenty percent disagree with the statement. Twenty-two percent have no feeling for or against the statement. And 31% agree with the statement as have an impact on their decision to participate due to faith in own physical abilities. Nine percent strongly agree with the statement. Faith and confidence in one owns abilities as shown here does have an impact on their level of participation in sports and physical activity.

Feeling physically inadequate due to opposite sex comments or thoughts has a direct influence on my participation level in sports or physical activity.

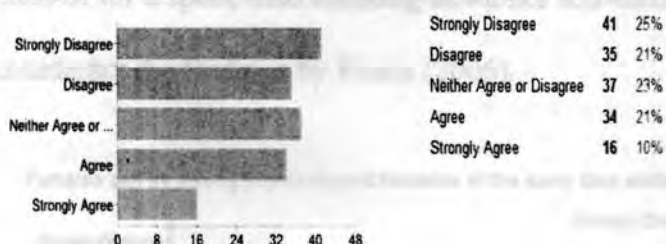


Figure 16

Research Question 9 Findings (Perception)

I wanted to find out with this statement how the perception of opposite sex comments and thoughts on females' physical abilities that would affect her participation in sport or physical activity. The responses show that just like teasing the influence of opposite sex comments or thoughts do not have an effect on participation levels. Forty-one of the girls strongly disagree with this statement followed by 35 of the girls only disagreeing with the statement. Thirty-seven of the girls have feelings toward agreeing or disagreeing with this statement. Thirty-four girls agree with this statement and 16 strongly agree with this statement. Looking at the data shows that male thoughts and comments have less of an effect on girls' choice to participate in sports and physical activity than one would think. Evans, (2006), in her research, found that girls' participation levels tended to decrease in relation to male comments, stares and thoughts. The girls would have a feeling of being objectified by the male, this objectification would linger even if the male is not there. And this may lead to the female feeling inadequate in the activities they may have to do in a physical education

class or for a sport, thus breaking down her self-esteem. The results that I have counteract the findings by Evans (2006).

Females can be strong physically and feminine at the same time while participating in sports and physical activity.

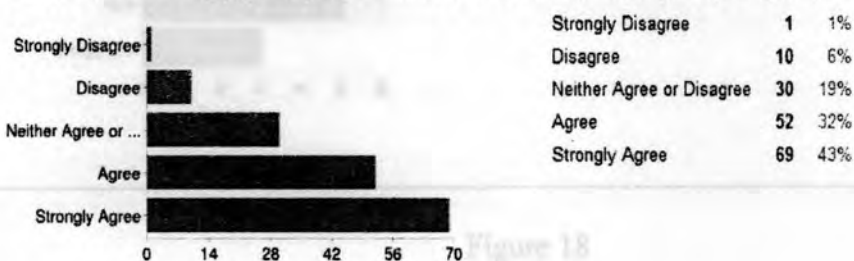


Figure 17

Research Question 10 Findings (Perception)

This statement was to find out if the perception of a physically strong female could be feminine. Research by Slater and Tiggemann, (2010) and Evans, (2006) discuss that being physically strong from a females' perspective in masculine and is not what the males are looking for in a female. The responses by the girls at my school seem to differ with their results. The combination of agree and strongly agree makes a 65% that say a female can be strong physically and feminine at the same time while participation in sports and physical activity. These results demonstrate that strength physically and being feminine can exist in the same person without the level of participation in sport and physical activity decreasing.

The type of activities that are offered in physical education class, such as team or individual sports, determines my choice to participate.

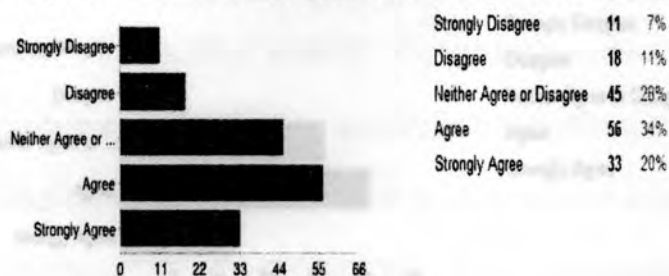


Figure 18

Research Question 11 Findings (Types of Activities)

The responses indicate that the type of activity will have an influence on the level or participation of the girls in physical education class. Only 7% strongly disagree and 11% disagrees with this statement. Twenty-eight percent neither agree nor disagree with this statement. A major 34% agree and 20% strongly agree with this statement of the type of activity determines the girls choice to participate in physical education class. I have seen in my classes that the activity that we do will have this effect on the girls in class. Either they all participate because they enjoy the activity or I will have some sit out because they do not like the activity or they think that it is a boy activity or they do not understand how to play or care how to play. Thus their level or participation decreases.

The emphasis placed on fun rather than competition in sports or physical activity determines my level of participation.

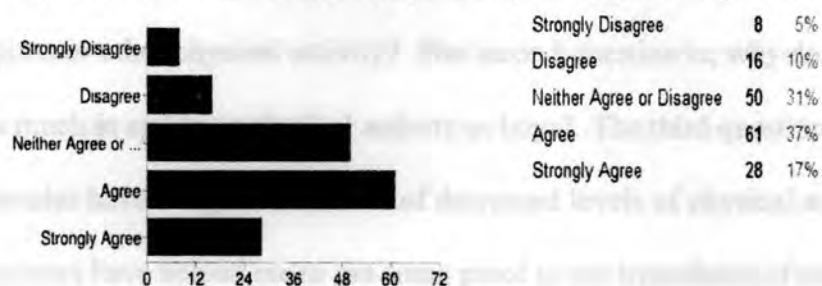


Figure 19

Research Question 12 Findings (Types of Activities)

The responses by the girls show that the majority of them feel that fun over competition is a strong determinant to their level of participation. Thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Thirty-seven percent agree and 17% strongly agree with this statement. My view is that if the girls do not enjoy an activity they will not participate thus the reason for the decline in physical activity.

Discussion

Looking over my data I find that some of the responses to my statements help give me answers to my main questions and hypothesis. On the other hand, some of the responses to my statements do not help to prove my main questions and hypothesis. The purpose of my research was to look at the indicators of: why students', specifically female students', sport and physical activity levels tend to decline once they get into junior and senior high school? As a clarification to my main question I want to answer the following questions with the help of my own

action research. The first question is; what are some reasons that girls stop playing sports or other physical activity? The second question is; why do girls not participate as much in sports or physical activity as boys? The third question is; why do young females have a higher incidence of decreased levels of physical activity? The survey answers have helped me to put some proof to my hypothesis of mental/perceptual concerns in relation to girls and low incidence of physical activity at the adolescent level.

I am going to break my findings down into the four reasons for the decline of sport and physical activity levels once they get into junior and senior high school. The reasons as mentioned in Chapter III and the subtitles for my survey are; individual, motivation, perception, and activities. I want to make as clear as I can what the data means to me from the standpoint of trying to find answers to my questions and hypothesis.

The responses I received from the girls taking the survey were varied especially in the area of individual reasons. The individual reason of time, peers, body image, own physical activity, and competition are considered in my opinion possible reasons for the decline of participation. The reason why I am labeling them possible reasons is because the data is so spread out but their ranking for most of them was more toward the reason being extremely important. The one individual reason in the ranking that was a definite response for lack of participation was enjoyment. The girls showed that enjoyment was a major deal breaker when thinking about participation in sport or physical activity. My overall feeling in looking at the data for the individual

area is that the ranking worked in my favor by giving me the possible reasons for not participating in sport or physical activity, but the statements dealing with teasing and competition, the girls did not agree that they were good enough reasons to not participate.

The second reason is motivation. I wanted to see if the girls were influenced by extrinsic, intrinsic, or both in their decision to participate in sport or physical activity. The findings seem to suggest to me that the girls can be influenced extrinsically by their peers to participate or not to participate in physical activity. Their peers can influence verbally or by how much fun and success they are having in their sport or physical activity. The girls did agree that their peers were an influence on participation in physical activity. My thoughts are that extrinsic motivation is a factor in their level of participation in physical activity especially if it is fun and it looks like they could also succeed at it. The girls also show by their responses that intrinsic motivation has an influence on their participation levels. If will make themselves feel better physically and mentally they are more inclined to participate in sport or physical activity.

The third reason that I am going to explain is perception. This one was a bit more in my favor and is one of the areas that I wanted to prove in my hypothesis. Three out of the four statements helped to prove my point about the girls' perception of themselves in regard to sport and physical activity. I wanted to find out if girls' perception of their competence in a sport and faith in their own physical abilities would have an impact on their participation level. And from their responses these two

points are proven and in agreement to my original thoughts that a girl's competence level and faith in their own physical abilities can have an influence on the level of participation in sport or physical activity. The statement on feeling physically inadequate due to opposite sex comments and thoughts did not have an effect on the girls' level of participation. This goes against the research presented by Evans (2006) in my literature review in Chapter II. She suggested that the "male gaze" is ever present and has a major influence on participation levels of girls. The girls' responses seem to disagree with her findings. The other statement that did not go along with the findings of Slater and Tiggemann, (2010) and my thoughts is the perception that a physically strong (masculine) female cannot be feminine. The girls responded that a girl can be strong physically and feminine at the same time. The only question that I have is that if the girls at this setting say that it is good to be physically strong, why do they not lift weights. Overall in dealing with the reason of perception has been proven and helps to give credence to my hypothesis of perception on competence and faith has an effect on the girls' levels of participation in sport and physical activity.

The last of the four reasons is activities. This one is pretty straight forward and the girls proved that in their responses. The type of activity either individual or team and if that activity is fun will make a difference on their level of participation. I think that this finding is true for any activity or event in life. At times an individual will have to do activities or events that he/she does not like to do but it is expected or required of them. I have been brought up believing and have learned throughout my

life that what you put into life you will get back. YOU are the only one that can make your participation in an activity enjoyable.

I was able to find some answers to the purpose of my research which was to look at the indicators of: why students' specifically female students', sport and physical activity levels tend to decline once they get into junior and senior high school? The findings associated with the following reasons; individual, motivation, perception, and activities have given me some a cause to reflect on my own teaching and how I will work with my students in the future. I feel that improvements can be made in how the subject is taught to the girls and boys in physical education classes. The findings were important because they helped to get at part of the problem of why girls' participation levels tend to decline as they get older.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old,
he will not depart from it.”

-Proverbs 22:6

Thompson, Berry, Hu (2012)

Introduction

The day is drawing to an end, as I watch the sun setting over Lake Superior, my time spent reminiscing about my school days is also drawing to an end. The time that I spent on the shore of this great lake has helped bring some perspective into my experiences as a physically active youth/teen and now as a Physical Education Specialist trying to keep the youth of today physically active. This perspective has lead me to create a survey to find out why participation in sport and physical activity has declined in our youth of today from when I was in school. The survey was given to both boys and girls in a small rural Midwestern junior/senior high school with a total population of 414 students. The responses taken from the 201 female students was the only data used in my research. The survey has helped to define the purpose of my research, which I chose to look at the indicators of: why students' specifically

female students' sport and physical activity levels tend to decline once they get into junior and senior high school? This was my main point of emphasis in doing my research. In this chapter I will look at what I learned from the data collected, limitations to my research and my recommendations after sifting through the findings.

What did I learn as a direct result of the data that I collected? I learned that there are individual reasons for the decline of participation in sport and physical activity. The following are the individual reasons; time, peers, body image, own physical activity, and competition. I also learned that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation has an influence on levels of participation. Perception had two areas that I learned are big in a girls' level of participation they are competence in an activity and faith in their own physical abilities. If they do not believe they are competent or they do not have faith in their physical ability they will not participate. And the last thing I learned is that if the girls like the type of activity, type of format either individual or team and if it is fun the level of participation will rise. If they do not like the activity their level of participation will decline.

The data collected while doing my research supports and challenges the information in my literary review. The individual ranking of reasons such as time, peers, body image, physical activity, and competition are close to supporting what the review states as main reasons for not participating. Enjoyment totally supported the review. The one that challenged the review was teasing, I thought that this would be more of a reason for lack of participation at my school but the data did not support that. The students given statements in the following reasons: individual, motivation,

perception and activities to agree with or disagree with for the survey. The individual statements dealing with teasing and competition challenged the review. The reason of motivation dealing with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation supported the literature. Perception of competence and faith in own abilities supported the literature while thoughts and comments from the opposite sex and females being physically strong contradicted what the literature brought out. The statements for perceptual reasons of opposite sex comments and females being strong physically surprised me. In all the literature these two parts of perception were the biggest reasons to not participate for girls. The idea of what a boy thinks or says about a girl had a major influence in her participation level. The other area of a female being physically strong was also a major reason for not participating. A female who was physically strong was not looked at as being feminine; she was looked at as being more masculine. The reason of activities dealing with types and fun both supported the literature review. I was able to find some support of the literature and some areas that challenged the literature. There may have been some limitations in my research that had an influence on the outcomes to not find similar results as the literature.

Limitations

The limitations to the research could be the sample size might be too small in order to get accurate results from the survey. The students may not answer the questions truthfully or may not answer the survey at all. The total number of respondents may be less due to being sick or participating in Post-Secondary Educational Opportunity (PSEO). Might not be enough time allowed for the students

to answer the survey. The students may not understand the questions on the survey or do not feel comfortable answering. The administration may not feel that the survey or the way the survey is being presented is appropriate for the students. Misunderstanding of what the questions are asking of the students. The number of students that actually do not participate in class is smaller than the ones that do, so the percentages will be in favor of the students that participate rather than the students that do not participate. The social study teachers not being able to answer some of the questions posed by the students about the survey in regard to finding the results when administering the survey. Not having the opportunity of doing personal interviews with a girl that participates and a girl that does not participate to get at the real reasons for the decline of participation in sport and physical activity. The students not knowing if the questions were aimed at their own personal feelings or feelings in general in terms of participation. These are some of the limitations that were confronted when having the students take the survey. After getting the results back from the survey I am better able to apply some recommendations for future research and creating ways to keep girls more physically active in physical education class.

Recommendations

My recommendations are going to pertain to further research and also to creating a better physical education setting to help increase participation levels in physical activity. I have thought of some improvements or additions to my research if I would like to find more detailed data. The first would be to survey another school in addition to the present school to compare results. Send the survey to a bigger school

such as a metro area school. Change the wording of the questions; for example, change teasing to drama associated with physical education class. Do personal interviews with two girls who participate fully in sports and physical activity and two girls who do not participate in sport and physical activity. Add the data from the boys' responses to compare thoughts between boys and girls. Survey and do personal interviews with Physical Education Specialist at the present school and neighboring schools to find out their thoughts on the decline in participation levels in girls specifically.

My recommendations in relation to what can be done in the physical education class is not as detailed. I have thought of offering more of a variety of activities for the students to participate in. Having the students choose a level of participation that they feel comfortable with such as expert, amateur or novice. Splitting the class into boys and girls doing the same activity but co-ed. This would allow the girls to feel more comfortable with their own skill level and competence in comparison to the boys especially if it is a male dominated sport like football. Asking the class for their suggestions on activities that they would like to do. And lastly, placing a higher expectation on the student to participate in class, allowing them to **want** to participate more in sport and physical activity.

Getting into my car and preparing to leave the shore of Lake Superior, I realize that tomorrow is a new day, the sun will rise and shine a light on the endless possibilities that are available to increase the levels of participation of our youth,

specifically girls. We sometimes have to look back to go forward in order to make the future brighter.

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APPENDICES

Physical Education Survey Questions
Individual Rankings

Physical Education Survey

Please read all of the questions and statements carefully. Answer as honestly as possible, please.

Individual Ranking

On a scale of 1 to 8, with 1 = not at all important and 8 = extremely important, please rank these individual reasons for not participating in sports or physical activity.

	1 = not at all important	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 = extremely important
Time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Body Image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tanning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over physical activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX A

Physical Education Survey Questions Individual Rankings

Individual	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:					
My lack of participation in physical education class is due to feeling that my peers will laugh at me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My lack of participation in sports or physical activity is due to competition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX B

Physical Education Survey Questions Individual

Individual

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My lack of participation in physical education class is due to teasing from my peers male and female.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My lack of participation in sports or physical activity is due to competition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX C

Physical Education Survey Questions
Motivation

Motivation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My participation in physical activity is influenced by my parents' expectations and feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I choose to participate in sports or physical activity to make myself feel better physically and mentally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching my parents succeed and being involved in sports or physical activity inspires me to participate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX C

Physical Education Survey Questions
Motivation

Motivation

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My participation in physical activity is influenced by my peers male and female.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I choose to participate in sports or physical activity to make myself feel better physically and mentally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching my peers succeed and have fun in sports or physical activity inspires me to participate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Perception	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My choice to participate in sports or physical activity depends upon my competence in that activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of skill in my own physical abilities determines my participation level in sports and physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling physically inadequate due to negative self- concepts or thoughts has a direct influence on my participation level in sports or physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Female can be strong physically and feminine at the same time when participating in sports and physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX D

Physical Education Survey Questions
Perception

Perception

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My choice to participate in sports or physical activity depends upon my competence in that activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of faith in my own physical abilities determines my participation level in sports and physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling physically inadequate due to opposite sex comments or thoughts has a direct influence on my participation level in sports or physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Females can be strong physically and feminine at the same time while participating in sports and physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Physical Education Survey Questions

Activities

Activities

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree or Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

The type of activities that are offered in physical education class, such as team or individual sports, determines my choice to participate.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The emphasis placed on fun rather than competition in sports or physical activity determines my level of participation.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

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